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ABSTRACT

Arguing that marketing appears to be a solid means for creating users' needs for information as well as for attracting potential users to the library, this paper reviews the current literature in Brazil on marketing information services and on user education. It also discusses the current status of library education in Brazil. An analysis of the specialized literature in Brazil shows that only a few articles have been published in the last few years dealing with the topic of marketing in libraries. In library education programs, the subject of marketing is being taught in Brazil mostly in specialized short courses; e.g., at the master's level, the topic is introduced as a module in the discipline "User's Study" in some courses. It is hoped that a new curriculum in library science started in 1984 will cover marketing concepts and strategies at the undergraduate level. Although a review of the literature on education of library users finds that education is taking place mainly in the university libraries, some articles also describe user education in special libraries in the fields of agriculture and medicine. The paper concludes with a brief description of the program being developed by the Central Library of the University of Rio Grande do Sul, which is making an intensive effort to prepare librarians of the university library system for the role of educating users. (THC)

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USER EDUCATION AND MARKETING OF INFORMATION SERVICES IN BRAZIL

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Marketing appears as a solid contribution for creating user's needs for information as well as for attracting potential users to the library. This was implied by Totterdel's classical study *"The effective library"* when he strongly criticized librarians for not making the necessary promotion of library services and products, thus not directing what he called of *"the non-expressed needs"* and not participating in the development of *"the non-activated"* user's need for information(11).

A brief analysis of the international specialized literature in the last years shows that a great effort is being done in order to make librarians knowledgeable of concepts and strategies of marketing.

At the same time, it is perceived that the first step in introducing this alien knowledge to librarians is to make them aware that:

1. Libraries nowadays are more than ever in a competitive situation with other channels of communication. As a matter of fact, libraries are just one more channel which can be reached for information by potential users. It seems to be a real survival problem for libraries in general having to compete in a modern communication world dominated by large profit organizations.

2. Librarians must break with old traditions and conservative ideas, being totally receptive to new concepts and strategies

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for promoting library services and products. The old concept that marketing was not appropriate for organizations not involved with an exchange process or in selling products, as libraries, must be eliminated and a new attitude towards marketing be created as an essential step in making libraries alive, dynamic and more attuned with current trends in the communication world.

3. According to Shapiro[8] *"intelligent, imaginative librarians have traditionally conducted programs that could be described as marketing activities"*. Carrol's game of *"old and new truths"*[1] about marketing is also a good illustration of this fact and reveals that what really is needed is a more active marketing mode for promoting library services and products among current and potential users. Therefore, librarians should not resent the adoption of techniques that will enhance the services and present the library products with more competitive appearance (packaging).

The analysis of the specialized literature in Brazil shows that only a few articles were published in the last years dealing with the topics of marketing in libraries; it must be said, though, that there is still a mixture or marketing with public relations, publicity, advertising, library publications and so on. There is not a clear idea yet of the marketing process of planning, analysis and testing of a product then followed by a promotional campaign. Or the view of marketing as a set of actions that leads to the provision of the best products and services by the lowest cost. These actions including since marketing research (user' study) for the ellaboration of products and services, until facilitating distribution and sale (dissemination and use of information).

Concerning library education, this subject of marketing is being taught in Brazil mostly in specialized and short courses; at the master's level, the topic is introduced as a module in the discipline *"User's study"* in some courses[2]. With the establishment of the new curriculum in library science started this year, it is hoped that marketing concepts and strategies will be learnt at the undergraduate level also.

Without doubt, the establishment of this new curriculum is hoped to bring about expected changes in the current situation of library education in Brazil. In a survey performed in 1977[3] on the situation of library education in the country, among the conclusions reached for the development of an adequate study program for Brazilian librarians, two points were raised:

1. The study program (curriculum) should provide an equilibrium between the social role and the technical functions of the librarian;
2. This program should be diversified not only by regions but also to consider local needs.

In a paper presented to FID/ET Hong Kong workshop in 1982, Polke[7] advanced and detailed these notions when she wrote:

1. Social awareness and professional competence are preconditions for librarians to perform in Brazilian society and to move towards the solution of problems in their professional area;
2. In the specific case of Brazilian library education, the dependent, discontinuous and enequal development of the country imposes a great demand for more critical and creative professionals who are characterized as agents of change rather than main-

tainers of the status quo.

This *"social awareness and professional competence"* are exactly the two points I made before concerning the need for making librarians knowledgeable about marketing concepts and strategies, though realizing that what is really needed is a change of attitude after all. Which, according to Polke, can be relied upon the new curriculum itself – as a instrument of change – or as a facilitator for gradual change through the own development of library education in Brazil.

Anyway, it must be reinforced that professional librarians in Brazil are in sore need of crash courses on the new concepts and strategies of marketing for application in their libraries. For the future professionals it is needed that such training has its starts at the undergraduate level already.

With some delight, I discovered that the few articles identified in the Brazilian literature on the subject of marketing brought in different approaches a very interesting vision of the marketing concepts and strategies for application in libraries. Let us quickly review them.

In one of the earliest papers on the subject, presented to the 9th Brazilian Congress of Librarianship and Documentation, in 1977, the author asserts that *"maybe the greatest advantage of applying marketing techniques in our libraries be that of creating a new perspective in one aspect of our activity which until now is relegated to a second plan: library goals. As in all organizations, library objectives are linked to a product – books, or to a service – reading"*. This surely is an imaginative approach that raises an universal problem: the lack of established goals for libraries, providing

at the same time a very good practical point to start with: the *goal of service*: reading, through *the product*: books[4].

A case study on the application of marketing techniques for the re-structuring of a reference sector of a library system introduces a most interesting contribution. The author, based on the exchange concept of marketing, developed a diagram portraying the librarian's need for human and professional reward against the user's as an human element that has his needs focused in obtaining information. Both are fulfilled by the (reference) librarian's role as the link between information and the user[9]

A more recent article deals with marketing concepts and strategies under the managerial approach stating that: *"(Brazilian) librarians are good technicians and specialists but are not good administrators. For obtaining success in a managerial function it is necessary a permanent analysis of the circumstances and the application of strategies for mediating in changing situations. For achieving this, it is necessary the renovation of the librarian, so he can administer the library applying modern administrative techniques influenced above all by marketing concepts. Only with this approach the (Brazilian) librarian will be able to look into the future, to question problems and to think of obtaining success when dealing with changing situations"* [6].

Another article discusses the relevance of the application of marketing techniques in the library dealing in a very thorough way on the practical aspects of this use. The authors state that the application of marketing strategies in the library has as its objectives not only to attract users

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but, mainly, to provoke the exhaustive use of all the available resources – which is exactly what Totterdel proposed in his study cited in the beginning of this paper. On the same line of thought they also raised the keen questions: Who is to blame for the lack of interest in libraries ? Is it the user or the libraries themselves ? Is n't it the user's lack of information on the library a problem mostly due to the lack of communication from the libraries themselves ? Finally, the authors advise the application of marketing for broadning the level of public awareness about library services and products[10].

I would like to add that this is certainly another type of crash course that should be given around the country: the education of potential users of information for the exhaustive use of all the available resources in libraries. Which leads us to the second topic of this paper: user education.

In this area, the Brazilian literature is more numerous and so is the practice. Or, in a way, we may say that the literature is more like a reflection of the practice, as the majority of the articles published are descriptions of courses or programs held or being held in libraries in different parts of the country.

Therefore, it seems that some effort is being made in Brazil for the aducation of library users, mainly in the university libraries. A study made in 1981 and based on a survey taken at these libraries presented a picture of the state of the art of education of users in university libraries in Brazil[5]. It reports that the first step in educating library users in Brazil dates of 1955 at the University of São Paulo (College of Odontology). The authors of this survey, Nocetti &

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Schleyer, assert that in the period of 1960-1979, a quick bibliographical search produced only 20 references and that this is not the only difference between the Brazilian and the international literature, which reports hundreds of studies for the same period. It seems suitable to bring some of the conclusions reached in that survey:

1. There is still not a full awareness for this problem on the part of authorities as well as librarians in general. But the efforts made in the last decade, when some of these courses were integrated to the university's curricula are showing fruits in the ' 80's with that number increasing significantly. This increase is attributed by the authors, by the proliferation of graduate courses whose students pressed libraries for such education, or, it was due to the rapid development of Brazilian information centers in that decade, which simply imitated the activities of the more advanced centers abroad;
2. The feeling that there is the need for different levels of courses for different levels of audiences (undergraduate and graduate students, professors, researchers);
3. The need for better prepared librarians for this activity, for it is easy to perceive that the librarian who has not attended graduate course or received training in methodology of teaching is not adequately prepared to plan or minister these courses;
4. Lack of financial resources, adequate time and faculty's indifference for these courses were, similarly to the international level, some of the reasons for not starting or increasing the number of courses. But the authors, trying to explain this finding, comment that *"these results seem to point to the*

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existence of a distortion in the ennumeration, by the librarians, of the university library's priorities". Probably, they say, "*as a reflex of the library education that emphasizes the technical aspects of the profession in detriment of the interface user/library. Also, it shows the disengagement of the university library from the educational system it should serve*";

5. The methods more used were lectures for bibliographical instruction and oriented tours, obviously, comment the authors, for not needing any major infrastructure;

6. The finding of a low percentage of evaluation of the courses by the students showed that the courses suffered no revisions or alterations. The majority of the existing evaluations referred indeed to the general organization of the courses and not to the achievement of the objectives. According to the authors, few courses bothered to establish objectives at all, which was attributted to the defficiencies in the education of librarians, and to the lack of involvement with the university environment where this gap could have been eliminated;

7. Very few libraries knew the users beforehand, that is, the study of the community was not the basis for the planning of the education of the user, as it should have been.

Continuing the analysis of the literature in this area, it can be noticed that besides user's education in university libraries, which represent the larger grouping, there is a preponderance of articles dealing with user's education in special libraries in the fields of agriculture and medicine. Possibly, here is what Nocetti & Schleyer spotted when they referred to the "*imitative activities of information centers in*

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the country during the '70's" as these two fields had started the most advanced information centers in Brazil, in the last decade.

Worthwhile mentioning also is the existence of two articles on user's education in school libraries; one as early as 1973 and the other more recent in 1981. This is very auspicious, since that school libraries are the most neglected type of library in the country. Having personally had the experience of presenting these two articles for a class discussion they were judged by the students as being highly recommended even serving as a model for training the users of school libraries, according to Brazilian standards.

The discovery of methods and instruments wich are adequate for marketing library services and products, as well as the education of library users in Brazil, that is, according to the national standards of library use and user's needs is a goal that must be envisioned by all those who are interested in the advance of librarianship in Brazil. As stated by Nocetti & Schleyer, the need for different proposals, particularly adequate proposals for Brazilian realities is considered fundamental.

It is no longer acceptable only imitating practices which are disengaged from our real needs and uses. The current stringengy, causing absolute lack of financial support for costly methodologies and instruments will have to heavily influence the librarian's choice from now on. As Nocetti & Schleyer put it, more study and research is needed in order that our solutions, our methodologies be chosen according to the peculiarities of our own systems and environments, our standards

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of library use, our own national needs in the area.

As a last but not the least point in this paper, it must be said that library education in Brazil has lacked in training the future professionals for the task of helping the users on how to fully utilize the library resources. Only in the new curriculum that is being established this year in library schools around the country is that the teaching of this subject is prescribed. Until then, this knowledge was imparted mostly in some master's and specialized courses, even against a line of thought existent in the country that argues that such knowledge should not or need not to be taught to library users.

Therefore, it can be concluded, that what has been or is being done in the country in this area is due to personal efforts of librarians who had the vision to perceive the need for this type of programs. But these librarians had based their courses mostly on foreign literature, or on the knowledge acquired through others who had trained abroad or in the country, or even by trial and error experiences in their own library environment, as it was with the early ones. And this is what Nocetti & Schleyer meant when they said that *"the current program for the education of librarians does not provide them with the ability of planning and developing user's study and education"*.

One good exception is the program which is being developed by the Central Library of the University of Rio Grande do Sul, the southernmost state in Brazil. For a couple of years now, an intensive effort is being done to better prepare the librarians of the University library system for the role of educating the users. As a basis for this program it was organized

a staff manual – after sometime of study and research – detailing the course objectives, the different levels, the instruments to be used (pamphlets, guides, av programs, manual programmed instruction, posters, transparencies, slides) the full program for orientation and instruction for each level, stating timing and duration, methodologies (lectures, oriented tours, classroom meetings) teaching responsabilities: librarians or specialists of other areas, evaluation by the application of questionnaires to the students. The manual also cites the opportunity to make a formal or informal user's study for whith it is recommended another staff manual dealing with the subject[12].

It must then be emphasized the inescapable role of the library schools in Brazil, with the suitable environment for study and research, of preparing librarians with competence and social awareness for performing this task of educating the library users. Only performing their jobs in a responsible way will Brazilian librarians be acting as the agents of change, critical, creative, of whom the profession, the country, is in so hard need of.

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